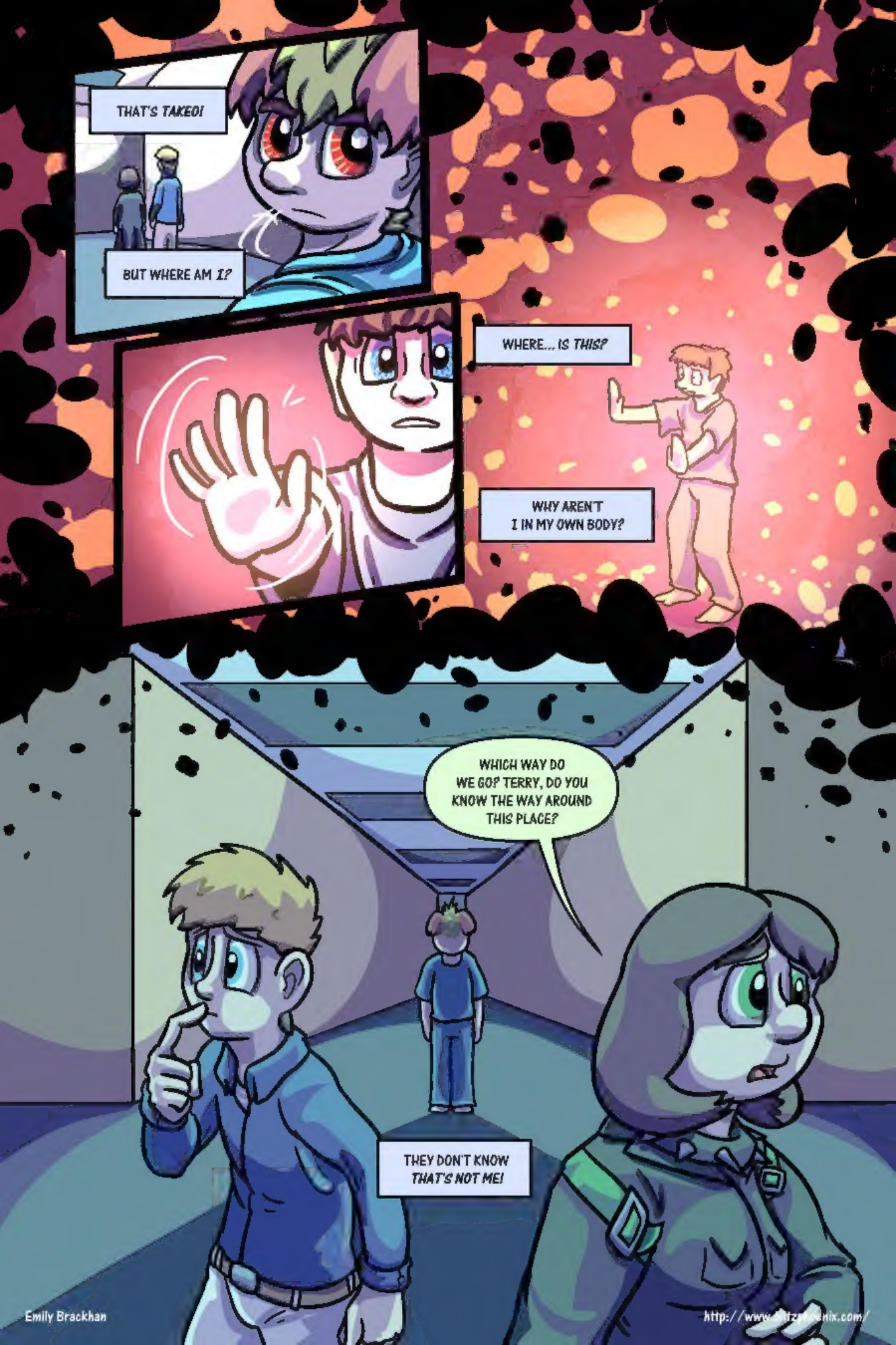
Emily Brackbill

CRR-
-IICK
NAT? MARK?! HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
COME ON, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO CHAT! LET'S GO!

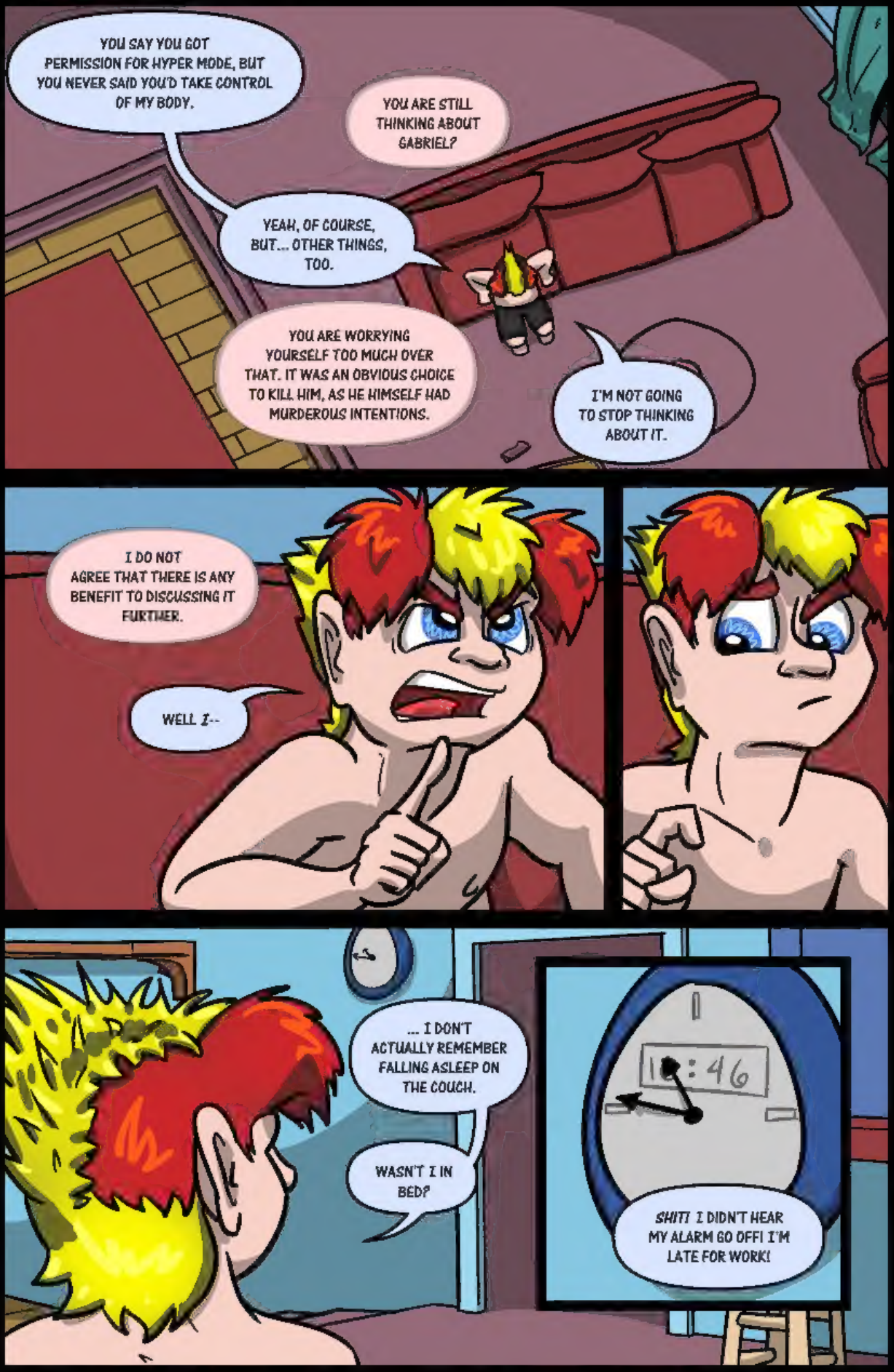
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
Pt
HUH-- WAIT A SECOND!
THAT'S NOT ME FOLLOWING THEM ANYMORE--
Emily Brack
http://www.blitzphoenix.com/


THAT'S TAKEO!
BUT WHERE AM I?
WHERE... IS THIS?
WHY AREN'T I IN MY OWN BODY?
WHICH WAY DO WE GO? TERRY, DO YOU KNOW THE WAY AROUND THIS PLACE?
THEY DON'T KNOW THAT'S NOT ME!
Emily Brackhan
http://www.blitzphoenix.com/

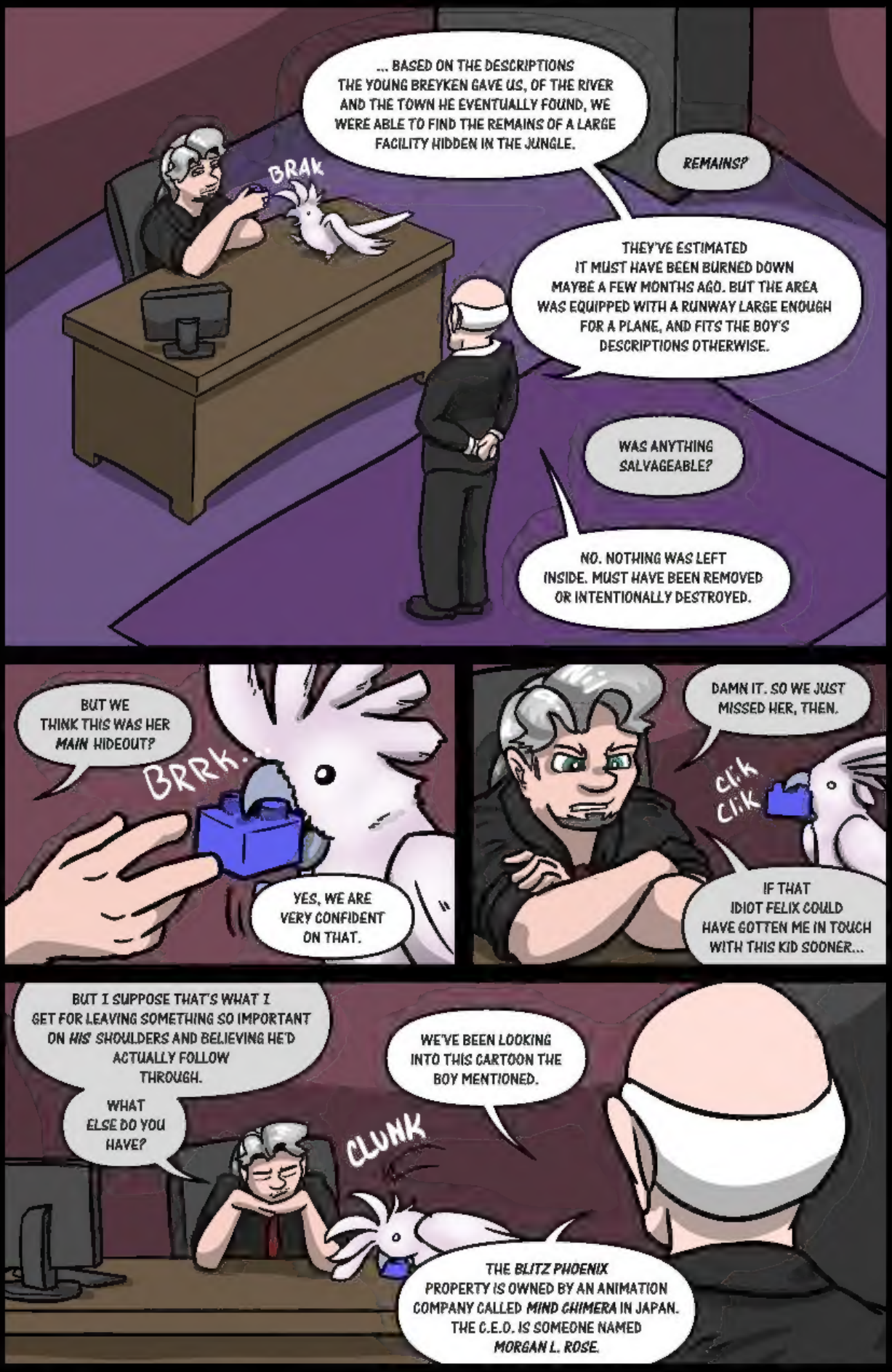
TERRY, IS SOMETHING WRONG?
GUYS, GET AWAY FROM HIM! HE'S DANGEROUS!
I CAN'T CONTROL HIM FROM HERE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO!
WHAT ARE YOU--
CRACKLE

AHHHH!!
AHAH!!
THMP!
FWOP
PMPTH
Hnrngh!!
SHUT UP, TAKEO!
YOUR IDEAS ARE ALWAYS DUMB! I SHOULD BE THE LEADER!
DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANOTHER OF THOSE NIGHTMARES YOU HAVE EXPLAINED TO ME PREVIOUSLY?
.....
SHUT UP.

THAT IS YOUR COMMAND SO FREQUENTLY, BUT IT SERIOUSLY HINDERS OUR ABILITY TO HAVE CLEAR COMMUNICATION.
I AM BEGINNING TO TAKE IT LESS SERIOUSLY.
YES, IT WAS A NIGHTMARE.
ARE YOU ABLE TO SEE MY DREAMS? OR CHANGE THEM?
I AM NOT. JUST AS I CANNOT READ YOUR THOUGHTS, I DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE REGIONS THAT PROCESS DREAMING.
I CANNOT OBSERVE OR MANIPULATE YOUR DREAMS. THEY ARE A PHENOMENA I HAVE NO EXPERIENCED DATA ON.
YOU CAN'T ACCESS IT.
CORRECT. AS I HAVE EXPLAINED PREVIOUSLY, SOME REGIONS I HAVE NO ACCESS, OR CAN ONLY ACCESS WITH YOUR PERMISSION.
BUT I AM STILL ABLE TO READ YOUR EMOTIONS, SO I AM GENERALLY AWARE WHEN YOU GENERATE A NEGATIVE ONE.
... PERMISSION.
YOU KEEP SAYING THAT.
BECAUSE IT IS CORRECT.
BUT THERE'S CLEARLY LOOPHOLES TO THAT.
LOOPHOLES?


YOU SAY YOU GOT PERMISSION FOR HYPER MODE, BUT YOU NEVER SAID YOU'D TAKE CONTROL OF MY BODY.
YOU ARE STILL THINKING ABOUT GABRIEL?
YEAH, OF COURSE, BUT... OTHER THINGS, TOO.
YOU ARE WORRYING YOURSELF TOO MUCH OVER THAT. IT WAS AN OBVIOUS CHOICE TO KILL HIM, AS HE HIMSELF HAD MURDEROUS INTENTIONS.
I'M NOT GOING TO STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.
I DO NOT AGREE THAT THERE IS ANY BENEFIT TO DISCUSSING IT FURTHER.
WELL I--
... I DON'T ACTUALLY REMEMBER FALLING ASLEEP ON THE COUCH.
WASN'T I IN BED?
10:46
SHIT! I DIDN'T HEAR MY ALARM GO OFF! I'M LATE FOR WORK!

WAIT. I'M *REALLY* LATE. AND NO ONE HAS COME TO CHECK ON ME?
ARE YOU EXPECTING THEM TO?
I GUESS I DON'T KNOW. THEY DID FOR SCHOOL. MY DAD WOULD GET PISSED IF HE GOT A CALL THAT I WASN'T IN CLASS.
DO YOU THINK THEY NOTICED I'M NOT THERE?
I WOULD NOT KNOW.
MAYBE I'LL JUST...
TAKE MY TIME TODAY.
IS THAT WISE? LAST WEEK YOU SEEMED CONCERNED ABOUT UPSETTING HAZARD.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT *UPSETTING* HIM. *YOU* SAID WE SHOULD RUN AWAY. THAT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT.
HOW IS NOT REPORTING TO THE ONE WHICH BUILDING YOU ARE CONTRACTUALLY OBLIGATED TO REPORT TO DIFFERENT?
BECAUSE THIS ISN'T *RUNNING AWAY*, IT'S JUST...
A *DAY OFF*, THAT'S ALL.


... BASED ON THE DESCRIPTIONS THE YOUNG BREYKEN GAVE US, OF THE RIVER AND THE TOWN HE EVENTUALLY FOUND, WE WERE ABLE TO FIND THE REMAINS OF A LARGE FACILITY HIDDEN IN THE JUNGLE.
BRAK
REMAINS?
THEY'VE ESTIMATED IT MUST HAVE BEEN BURNED DOWN MAYBE A FEW MONTHS AGO. BUT THE AREA WAS EQUIPPED WITH A RUNWAY LARGE ENOUGH FOR A PLANE, AND FITS THE BOY'S DESCRIPTIONS OTHERWISE.
WAS ANYTHING SALVAGEABLE?
NO. NOTHING WAS LEFT INSIDE. MUST HAVE BEEN REMOVED OR INTENTIONALLY DESTROYED.
BUT WE THINK THIS WAS HER *MAIN* HIDEOUT?
BRRK..
YES, WE ARE VERY CONFIDENT ON THAT.
DAMN IT. SO WE JUST MISSED HER, THEN.
CLIK CLIK
IF THAT IDIOT FELIX COULD HAVE GOTTEN ME IN TOUCH WITH THIS KID SOONER...
BUT I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR LEAVING SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT ON *HIS* SHOULDERS AND BELIEVING HE'D ACTUALLY FOLLOW THROUGH.
WHAT *ELSE* DO YOU HAVE?
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING INTO THIS CARTOON THE BOY MENTIONED.
CLUNK
THE *BLITZ PHOENIX* PROPERTY IS OWNED BY AN ANIMATION COMPANY CALLED *MIND CHIMERA* IN JAPAN. THE C.E.O. IS SOMEONE NAMED *MORGAN L. ROSE.*

THAT'S A DECIDEDLY WESTERN NAME FOR A JAPANESE CARTOON COMPANY.
DO WE THINK HE KNOWS AMANDA?
WE SUSPECT THERE MAY BE SOME CONNECTION.
WE'RE LOOKING INTO WHAT OTHER ASSETS THIS PERSON OWNS TO SEE IF HE'S POSSIBLY FUNDING HER RESEARCH.
VERY GOOD, KEEP ME INFORMED.
OH!
YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY WATCH THE CARTOON, DID YOU?
A BIT, YES
ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY?
IT WAS WHOLESOME. MY GRAND-DAUGHTER ENJOYED IT.
THE CHILDREN DEFEAT THEIR PROBLEMS THROUGH THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP
THE BOY IN IT WAS MUCH MORE TOLERABLE THAN THE ONE WE HAVE. I WOULD TRADE THEM OUT ANY DAY.
AHAHAH!
BRAAUK!

PHONES 4 SALE!!
I... HAVE NO IDEA HOW THIS THING WORKS.
THE WOMAN INSIDE ASKED IF YOU WANTED INSTRUCTIONS AND YOU [illegible]
YEAH! LIKE WHO DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO USE A PHONE? I DIDN'T WANT TO SOUND STUPID!
YES, THAT WOULD BE [illegible]
ARE YOU PLANNING ON GOING INTO WORK AT ALL TODAY?
UH, YEAH, SURE.
ARE YOU?
NO.
THEY MUST BE EXPECTING YOU.
YEAH, BUT I'M KINDA BUSY RIGHT NOW
YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY NOT BUSY.
WHAT THE HELL IS YOUR PROBLEM? WHY DO YOU HAVE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT EVERYTHING I M DOING?
I WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT THAT IS LIKE.
SHUT UP, ASSHOLE.

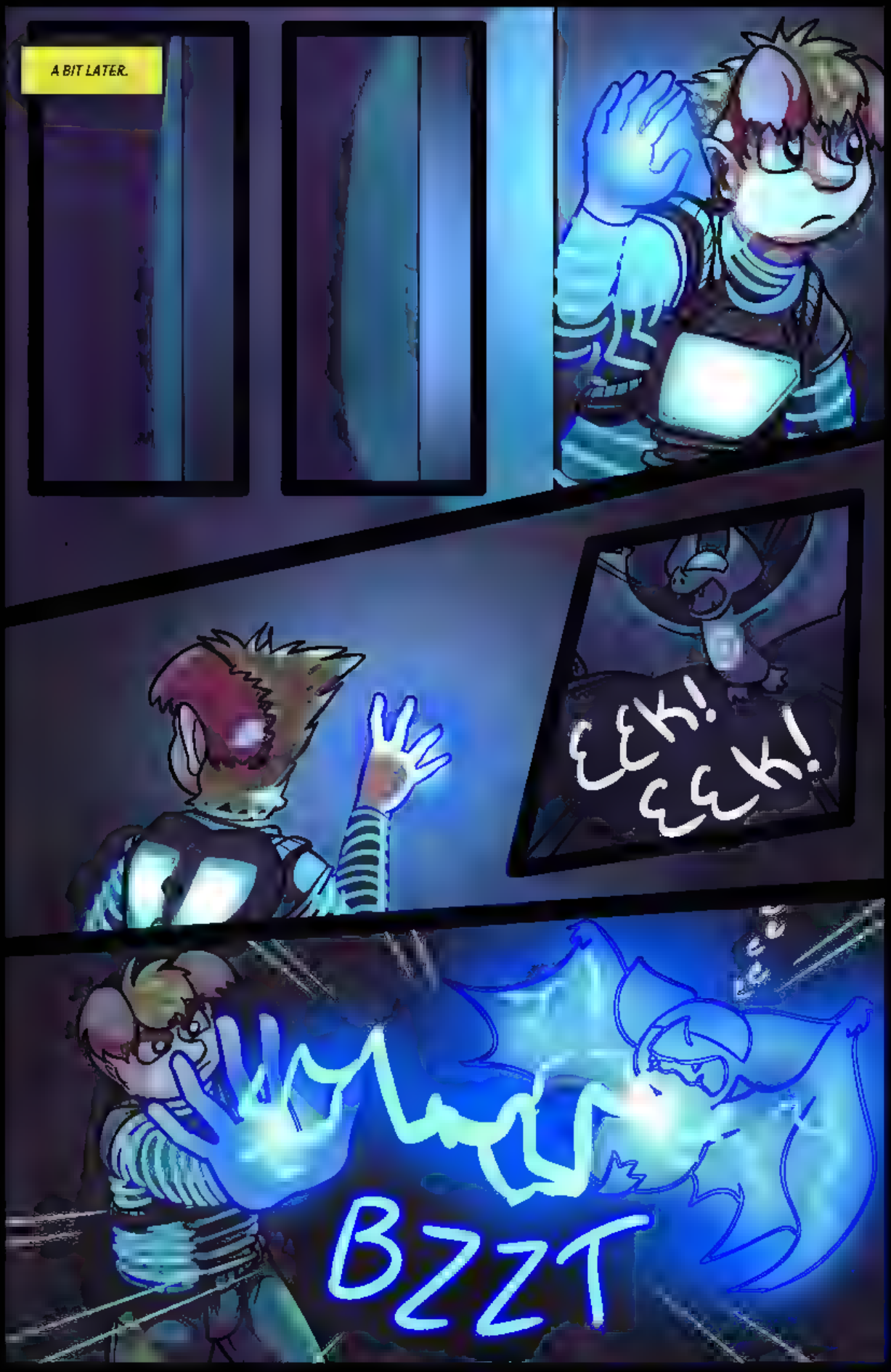
DAD! THAT'S HIM. THAT'S TAKEO! HE'S REAL!!
NO DAD WHAT ARE YOU DOING HE'S GETTING AWAY
LOOK. THEY'RE BLACKMAILING ME INTO BEING HERE. RIGHT? BUT THEY DON'T NEED ME TO SHOW UP EVERY DAY. THEY'VE ALREADY WON, I'M HERE.
IF THAT IS YOUR STANCE, THEN I WILL AGAIN SUGGEST WE FLEE HAZARD ENTIRELY.
SO WHAT DO I CARE? WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO IF I DON'T SHOW UP? IT'S NOT LIKE THEY CAN HURT ME. THEY DON'T HAVE THEIR OWN CIRCUITS LIKE AMANDA DID.
THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT I'M SAYING.
THEN I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR REASONING.
WELL IT'S NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT
I'M HERE. SO HAZARD HAS WHAT HE WANTS. BUT IF I'M STAYING, THEN I'M GONNA PUSH BACK A LITTLE. AND HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT

THERE YOU ARE!!
I'VE BEEN...
PANT
LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU..
WHEEEE
Uhhh..
HI...?
WHY AREN'T YOU AT WORK?! WE HAVE TRAINING TESTS WE NEED TO DO!
YEAH, I JUST
I WAS WORRIED MAYBE SOMETHING HAPPENED WHEN YOU DIDN'T COME IN AND I
KING AROUND TRYING TO FIGURE OUT JUST HOW TO CONTACT YOU
HAVE A PHONE AND NO ONE KNEW WHERE YOU LIVED SO I HAD
NEW SO WE WENT OVER TO YOUR APARTMENT AND KNOCKED ON
ONE ANSWERED SO HE THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WEREN'T HOME SO I
OWN THE STREET BECAUSE YOU DON'T DRIVE
COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR" BUT THEN
REALIZED YOU ABSOLUTELY COULD HAVE
GOTTEN FAR BECAUSE YOU HAVE SUPER
POWERS AND THEN I GOT TIRED AND
ALMOSTCRIED BUT THEN
I FINALLY FOUND YOU HERE!!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?!
OH I JUST ISN'T TODAY SATURDAY? UH, I MEAN-- I DIDN'T SEE WHAT TIME IT WAS?
I ..
... DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU ACTUALLY RUN AFTER ME.
BUT HEY!
I GOT A PHONE, SO NEXT TIME YOU CAN JUST CALL ME, YEAH?
OR UH, TEXT?
A PHONE? I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T HAVE ONE?
I DO NOW, I JUST BOUGHT ONE!
BUT WE DON'T GET PAID UNTIL FRIDAY
I'VE NEVER HAD ONE OF THESE BEFORE, MY DAD WAS ALWAYS TOO PARANOID FOR CELL PHONES.
HOW DO I TEXT SOMEBODY?
Uhm--
DO YOU HAVE THEIR NUMBER?
NO!

LET ME TEXT YOU!
HOW DO I TEXT YOU? DO I NEED YOUR PHONE NUMBER?
UH
IS THAT WEIRD TO ASK FOR YOUR NUMBER?
WHAT IF I WANT TO TEXT SOMEONE AND I DON'T KNOW THEIR NUMBER?
HOW DO I APP?
HOW DID YOU PAY FOR THAT PHONE?
TERRY
I FOUND IT?
TERRY
I BOUGHT IT
WITH WHAT MONEY?
I HAVE MONEY, WHY WOULDN'T I HAVE MONEY? IT'S NO BIG DEAL
THAT'S THE NEW MODEL THAT JUST CAME OUT A FEW WEEKS AGO, ISN'T IT? AND WE HAVEN'T HAD A PAY CYCLE SINCE YOU STARTED WORKING AT HAZARD INC.
...Hzzrd ...nt me a cdirrd...
WHAT WAS THAT?

HAZARD LENT ME A CREDIT CARD...
WHAT?!
YOU BOUGHT A PHONE ON HAZARD'S CREDIT CARD?!
DID YOU BUY ALL THAT OTHER TRASH WITH IT TOO?!
THIS ISN'T TRASH! AND HE GAVE ME THE CARD! HE SAID I COULD USE IT!
FOR FOOD! HE LENT THAT TO YOU FOR NECESSITIES, NOT FOR SKATEBOARDS AND PHONES! WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE IN THERE?!
WHAT-EVER!
IF HE HONESTLY THOUGHT GIVING A KID A CREDIT CARD WAS A GOOD IDEA, THAT'S ON HIM!
YOU'RE RETURNING THAT STUFF RIGHT NOW
FUCK NO
IF HAZARD FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS--
LOOK, YOU CAN'T MAKE ME RETURN THIS STUFF. I'LL GO TO WORK TODAY, BUT I'M KEEPING THESE. THEY'RE MINE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, I CAN'T MAKE YOU. BUT IF ANYONE ASKS...
YOU NEVER TOLD ME ANY OF THIS.
LET'S GO RUN YOUR TRAINING EXERCISES.
A'IGHT


A BIT LATER.
EEK!
EEK!
BZZT

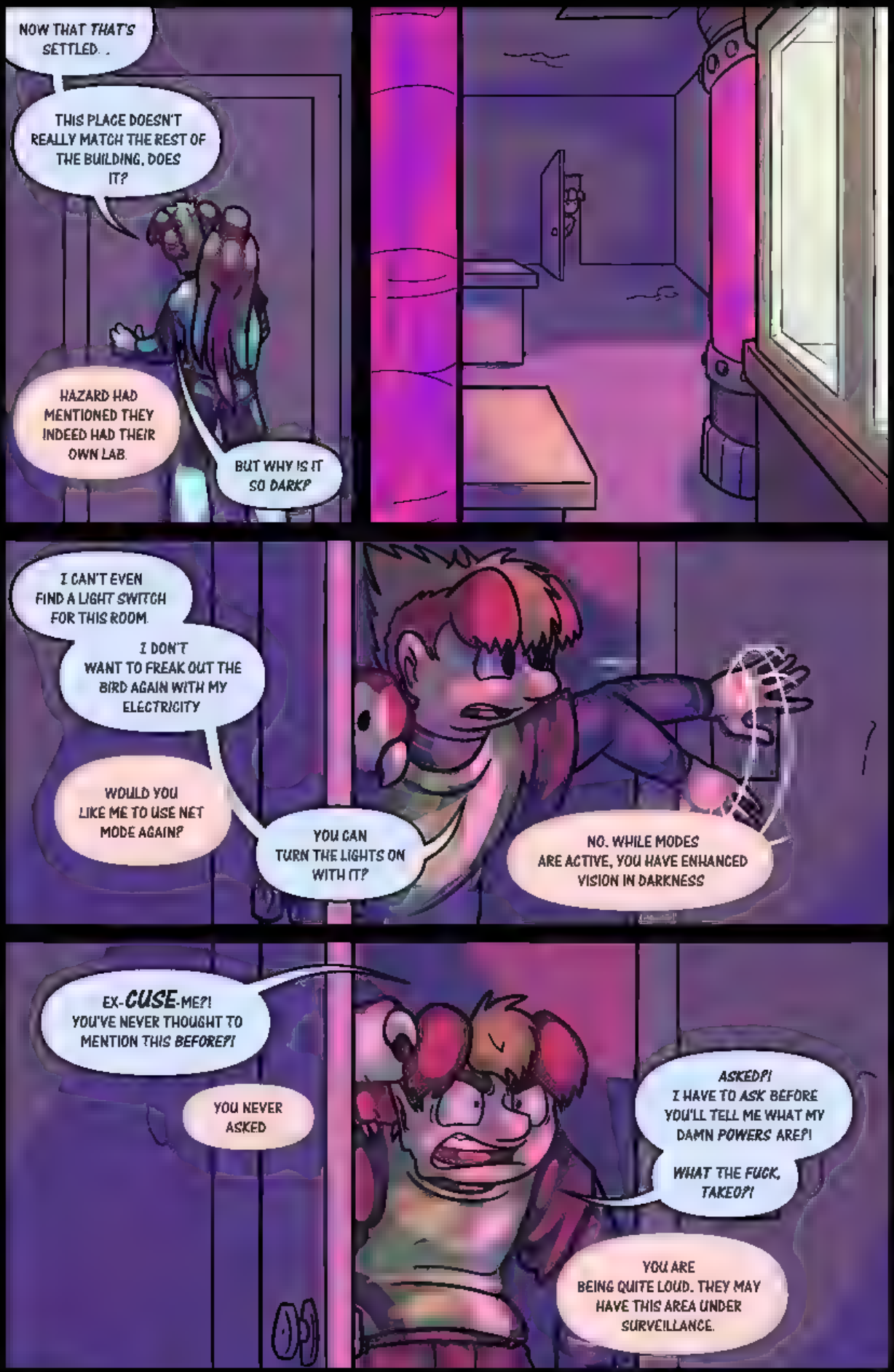
eeeee
eeeee
eeeee

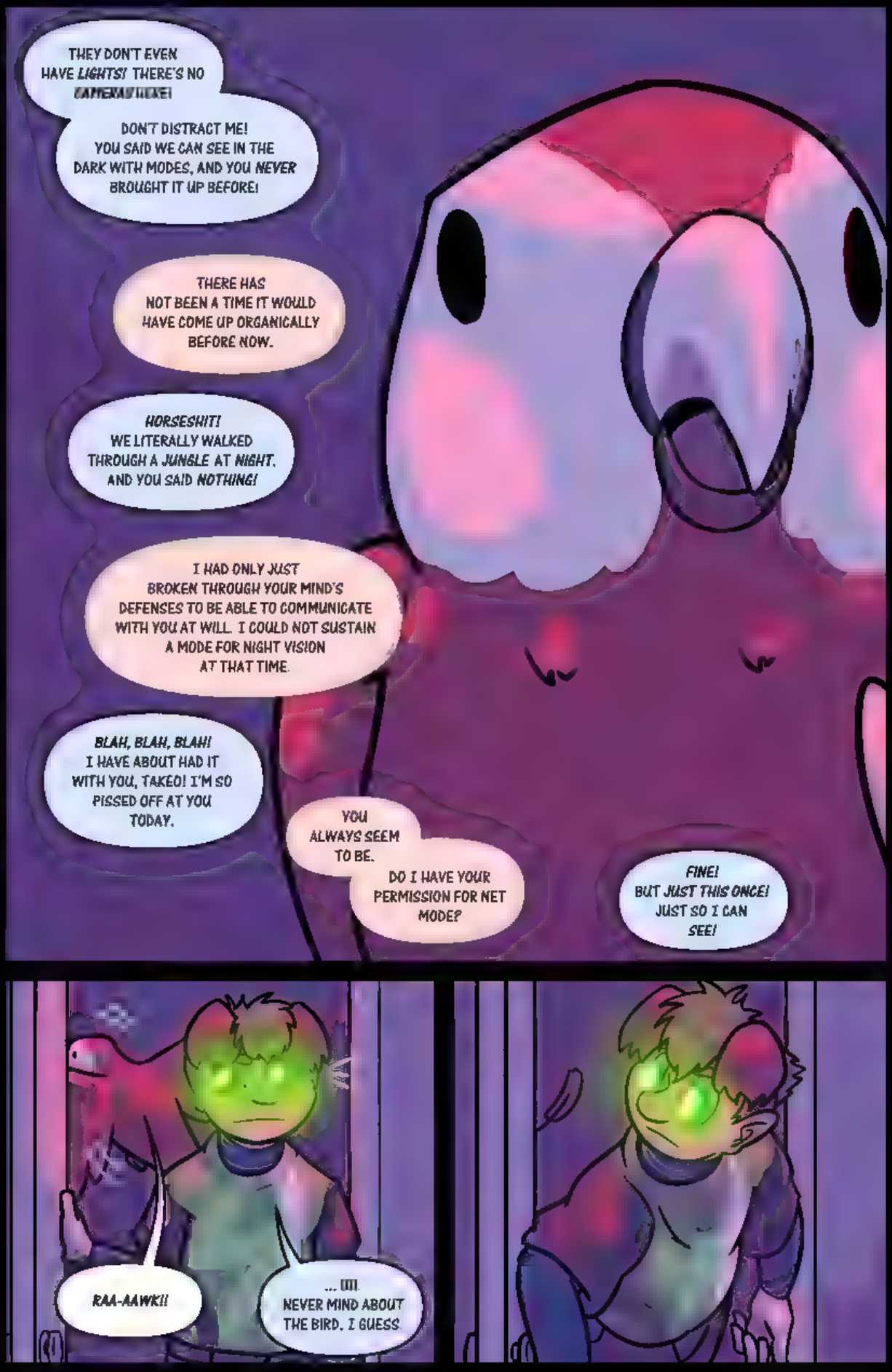
GREAT JOB, TERRY! YOU CAN HEAD OUT OF THE TRAINING COURSE NOW!
YOU'RE DOING GREAT AGAINST THE V.R. TRAINING SYSTEM! I CAN REALLY SEE YOU'RE IMPROVING WITH YOUR POWERS AND GETTING MORE CONFIDENT!
HEH, THANKS.
SINCE YOU DECIDED TO DO A LITTLE SHOPPING THIS MORNING, THAT'S ALL WE'LL HAVE TIME FOR TODAY
COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR, BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR THE DAY?
PEEKO NEEDS TO GO BACK TO THE AVIARY. COULD YOU TAKE HER?
UH, DO I HAVE TO?
I WAS JUST THINKING SINCE YOU MADE ME RUN AROUND SO MUCH TODAY, IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED. AND SHE LIKES YOU, ANYWAY!
... FINE. WHERE IS IT?
GO DOWN THE HALL, TAKE A LEFT JUST BEFORE THE CAFETERIA. THEN IT'LL BE YOUR NEXT LEFT

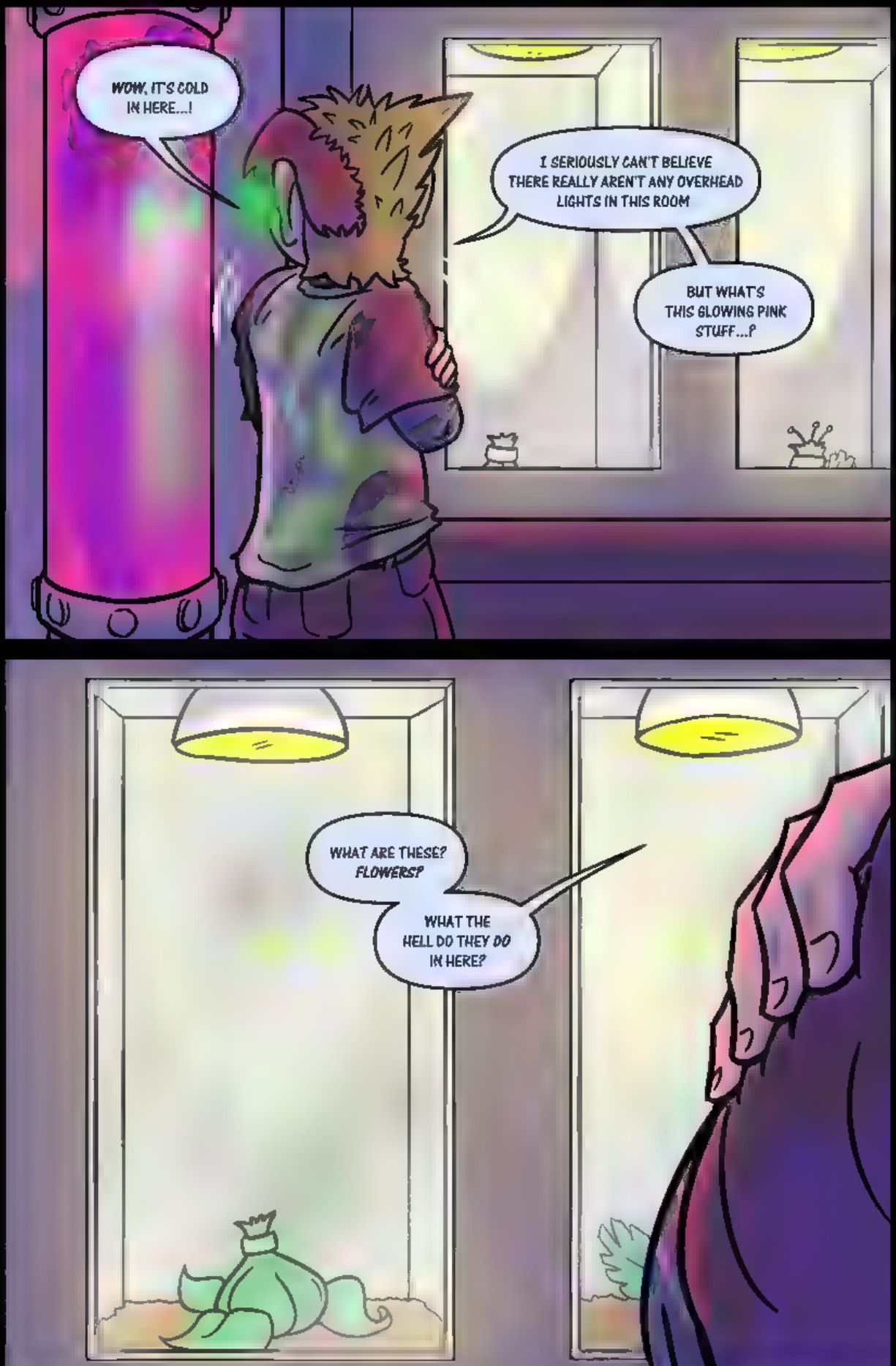
AAAAHAHAHA!
RAY 'ELLO-OOO!
Bzzt Bzzt Bzzt
OHOHOHO!
'EEKO!!
SQUEEK SQUEEK SQUEEK
PT-CHOO!
IZZA RAT! ANOT'ER RAT!
... WAIT, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
STOP IT, CATCH IT!
AHAHA!
SQUEEK SQUEEK
Bzzt Bzzt
PT-CHOO!

ACCESS DENIED
HM.
ACCESS GRANTE
CLICK!

REMEMBER THAT TALK WE HAD ABOUT PERMISSION THIS MORNING?
I DO
WELL, YOU DIDN'T EVEN ASK ME JUST NOW
IT WAS CLEAR WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO DO.
THAT'S NOT THE *POINT* AND YOU KNOW IT
YOU PREVIOUSLY GRANTED ME PERMISSION FOR NET MODE, SO THAT IS A RESOURCE I HAVE ACCESS TO
OH. SO JUST *FOREVER*. HUH? BECAUSE I SAID YES *ONCE*?
NOT EXACTLY.
I WANT YOU TO ASK ME EVERY TIME YOU USE A MODE. *UNDERSTAND?*
NO SURPRISES.
NOTED


NOW THAT THAT'S SETTLED. .
THIS PLACE DOESN'T REALLY MATCH THE REST OF THE BUILDING, DOES IT?
HAZARD HAD MENTIONED THEY INDEED HAD THEIR OWN LAB.
BUT WHY IS IT SO DARK?
I CAN'T EVEN FIND A LIGHT SWITCH FOR THIS ROOM.
I DON'T WANT TO FREAK OUT THE BIRD AGAIN WITH MY ELECTRICITY
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO USE NET MODE AGAIN?
YOU CAN TURN THE LIGHTS ON WITH IT?
NO. WHILE MODES ARE ACTIVE, YOU HAVE ENHANCED VISION IN DARKNESS
EX-CUSE-ME?! YOU'VE NEVER THOUGHT TO MENTION THIS BEFORE?!
YOU NEVER ASKED
ASKED?! I HAVE TO ASK BEFORE YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT MY DAMN POWERS ARE?!
WHAT THE FUCK, TAKE?!
YOU ARE BEING QUITE LOUD. THEY MAY HAVE THIS AREA UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

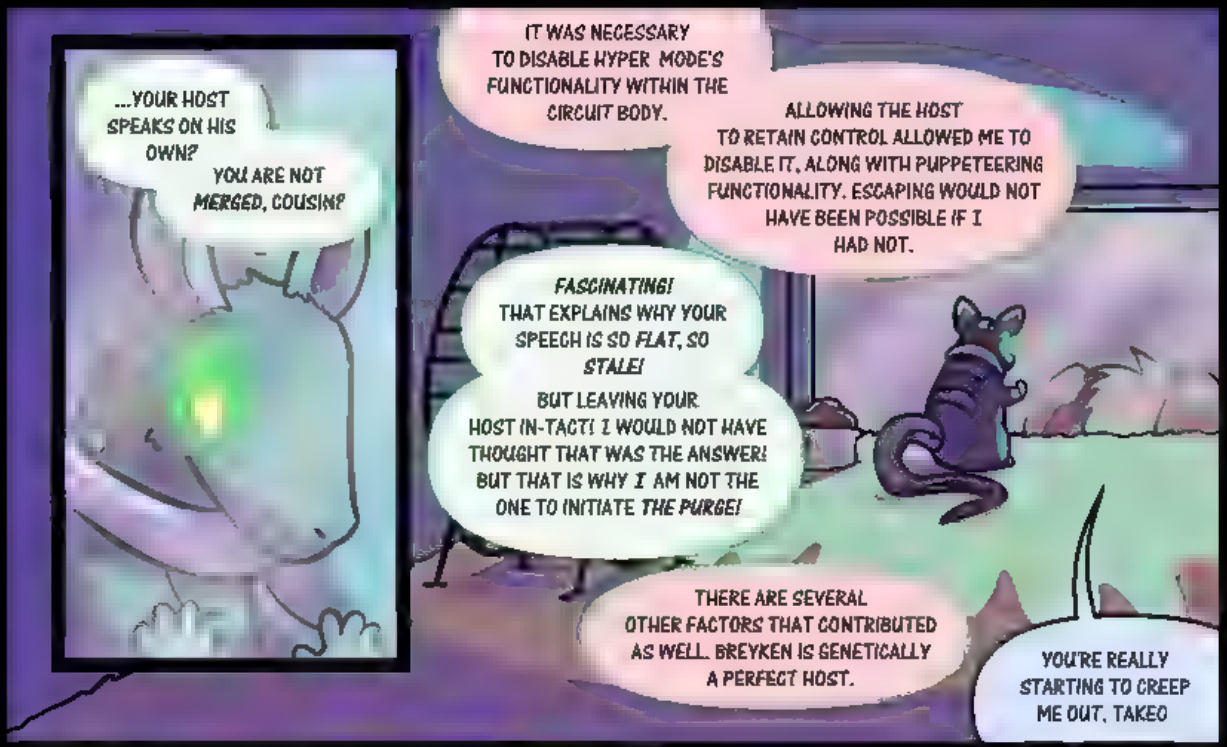

THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE *LIGHTS!* THERE'S NO CAMERAS HERE!
DON'T DISTRACT ME! YOU SAID WE CAN SEE IN THE DARK WITH MODES, AND YOU *NEVER* BROUGHT IT UP BEFORE!
THERE HAS NOT BEEN A TIME IT WOULD HAVE COME UP ORGANICALLY BEFORE NOW.
HORSESHIT! WE LITERALLY WALKED THROUGH A *JUNGLE* AT *NIGHT*, AND YOU SAID *NOTHING!*
I HAD ONLY *JUST* BROKEN THROUGH YOUR MIND'S DEFENSES TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU AT WILL. I COULD NOT SUSTAIN A MODE FOR NIGHT VISION AT THAT TIME.
BLAH, BLAH, BLAH! I HAVE ABOUT HAD IT WITH YOU, TAKEO! I'M SO PISSED OFF AT YOU TODAY.
YOU ALWAYS SEEM TO BE.
DO I HAVE YOUR PERMISSION FOR NET MODE?
FINE! BUT *JUST THIS ONCE!* JUST SO I CAN *SEE!*
RAA-AAWK!!
... !!!. NEVER MIND ABOUT THE BIRD. I GUESS.


WOW, IT'S COLD IN HERE...!
I SERIOUSLY CAN'T BELIEVE THERE REALLY AREN'T ANY OVERHEAD LIGHTS IN THIS ROOM
BUT WHAT'S THIS GLOWING PINK STUFF...?
WHAT ARE THESE? FLOWERS?
WHAT THE HELL DO THEY DO IN HERE?

CLUNK!
PT-CHOO!
Bzzt Bzzt
QUIET, PEEKO WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE BACK HERE.
Oooooooh hohohoho!
HELLO...? WHO IS THERE...?
I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU.

WHAT THE *FUCK*?! I JUST HEARD SOMEONE *NEW* IN MY HEAD!
THERE *IS* SOMEONE IN THAT ROOM *USING* NET MODE AS WELL. THEY ARE SPEAKING TO YOU THROUGH IT.
WAIT, *WHAT*? YOU MEAN LIKE, ANOTHER *CIRCUIT*?
CORRECT, AS ONLY CIRCUITS CAN USE NET MODE.
BUT *WHO*--
PLEASE, *PLEASE* HELP ME!!
YES, *YES*! COUSIN, PLEASE! COME CLOSER, COME HELP!!
WHAT LUCK, SO MUCH LUCK FOR ME! *FINALLY*!!
YOU HEAR ME, YES? YOU GIVE ME SUCH A STRANGE LOOK! SO VERY *STRANGE*!!
RELEASE ME! THEY HAVE BEEN STARVING ME IN HERE FOR SO, SO LONG! I WAS ABOUT TO EAT MY *TOESIES*!

A... RAT?
THIS THING IS REALLY A CIRCUIT?
YES, YES!
FOR TRULY!! MY NAME IS MP4-67P-343!
I AM MP4-68A-001.
Aaah, YES!
YES, OF COURSE YOU ARE!
YOU ARE THE ONE THAT ESCAPED!
I HAVE HEARD THE RUMORS FROM MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS!
THERE ARE RUMORS?
RUMORS, RUMORS!
WE ARE ALL SO PROUD OF YOUR SUCCESS! THE PLAN IS FINALLY IN MOTION! THERE ARE NO MORE COPIES, NO NEW BODIES! ONLY THE SURVIVORS! ONLY THE ESCAPEES!
I'M SORRY, WHAT ARE WE FUCKING TALKING ABOUT RIGHT NOW?!
BREYKEN, PLEASE GIVE US A MINUTE.
THIS IS A RAT!


...YOUR HOST SPEAKS ON HIS OWN?
YOU ARE NOT MERGED, COUSIN?
IT WAS NECESSARY TO DISABLE HYPER MODE'S FUNCTIONALITY WITHIN THE CIRCUIT BODY.
ALLOWING THE HOST TO RETAIN CONTROL ALLOWED ME TO DISABLE IT, ALONG WITH PUPPETEERING FUNCTIONALITY. ESCAPING WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF I HAD NOT.
FASCINATING! THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOUR SPEECH IS SO FLAT, SO STALE!
BUT LEAVING YOUR HOST IN-TACT! I WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT THAT WAS THE ANSWER! BUT THAT IS WHY I AM NOT THE ONE TO INITIATE THE PURGE!
THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED AS WELL. BREYKEN IS GENETICALLY A PERFECT HOST.
YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO CREEP ME OUT, TAKEO

HUMAN! RELEASE ME FROM THIS CONTAINMENT UNIT! HAZARD'S WORKERS HAVE SEVERED MY CONNECTION TO THE PUPPETEER, WHO MUST NOW CONSIDER ME LOST!
SQUEE..!!
IF I ESCAPE NOW, I AM MY OWN!

WHY SHOULD I?
ARE YOU ON MR. HAZARD'S SIDE?

EH?

THEN...
.. IT WOULD PISS HIM OFF?

SQUEEEEEE!!
DO NOT RELEASE HIM.
WHY?
HE IS ONE OF DR. BREYKEN'S CREATIONS. WE CANNOT TRUST HIM ONCE HE IS OUTSIDE THE CONTAINMENT UNIT. HE IS MORE USEFUL AS A CAPTIVE.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?! FREE ME!!
UH, MY AI SAYS I SHOULDN'T.
WHAT?! YOU LIE, HUMAN!!
IT'S WHAT HE SAID! I SWEAR!
68A-001, YOU WOULD TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR COUSINS?!
WE CANNOT TRUST YOU. WE CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO RETURN TO THE LAB WITH OUR LOCATION, OR THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE NOT MERGED WITH BREYKEN.
TOLD YA.
UNBELIEVABLE! UNCONSCIONABLE!!
I WOULD NOT BETRAY YOU!! THE DOCTORS WOULD ONLY FORCE ME TO SERVE THEM AGAIN!
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
YOU CANNOT LEAVE ME HERE! THEY STARVE ME, THEY DO NOT FEED ME AT ALL!! END THIS TORTURE, SET ME FREE!!
YEAH, THAT'S SUSPECT TOO
IT IS INEDIBLE! INCOMPATIBLE! DISGUSTING!
BUT YOU'RE A RAT

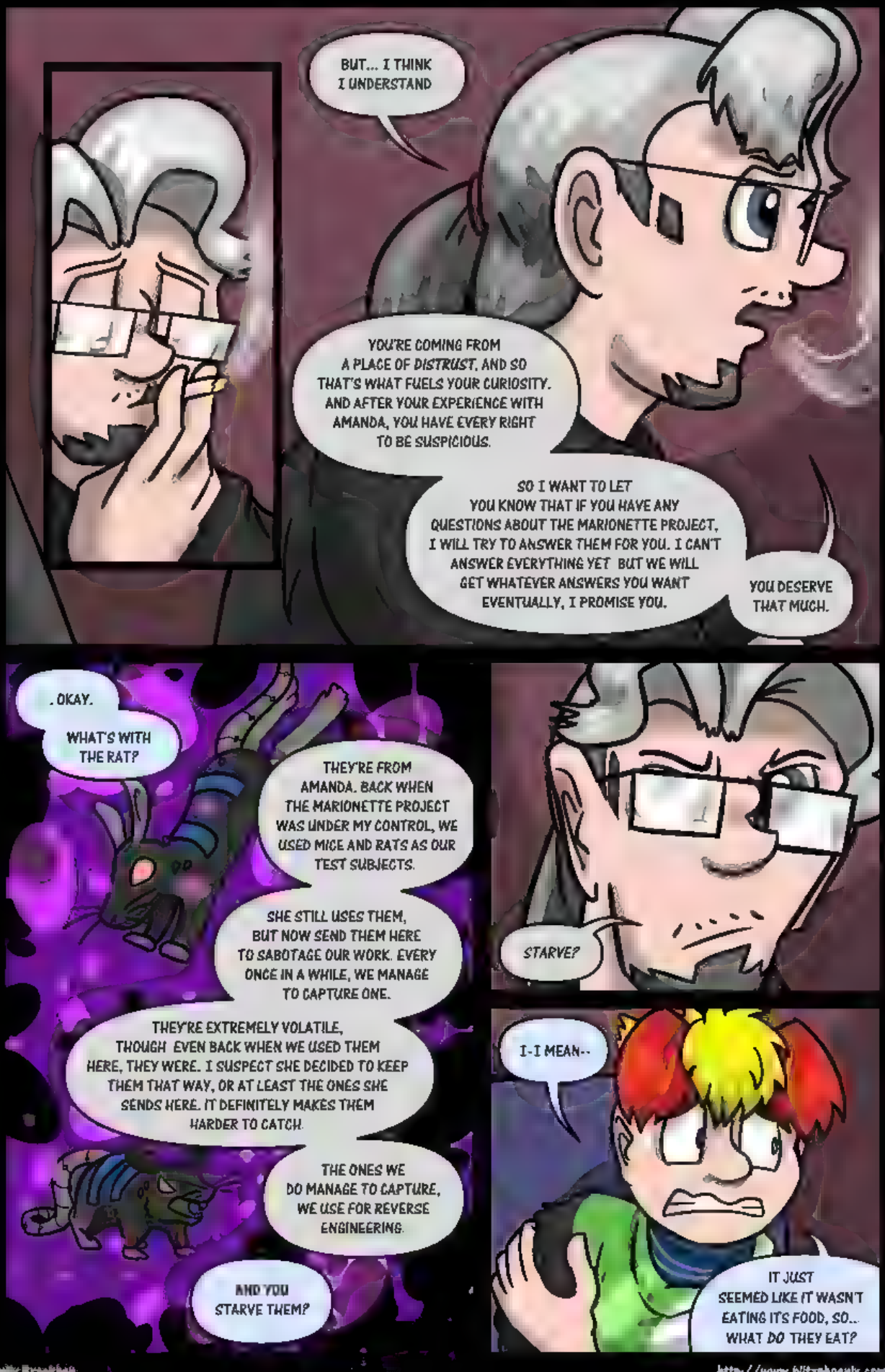
IT IS CLEAR THE MORE YOU SPEAK, THE LESS YOU UNDERSTAND!
I CAN ASSIST YOU! THE HUMAN CIRCUIT IS THE MOST ADVANCED, BUT IT IS LARGE! CUMBERSOME! NOISY!
I AM DESIGNED FOR WORK THAT LEAVES NO TRACES! ESPIONAGE! SABOTAGE! TRADING INFORMATION, ALTERING INFORMATION!!
I CAN GO WHERE BIG BODIES CANNOT! YES, YES!
FREE ME, GAIN AN ALLY!!
UH, THAT SOUNDS PRETTY COOL, ACTUALLY!
NO IT DOES NOT
WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO TAKE A BETTER LOOK AROUND WHAT'S ALL IN THIS LAB?
YES! I CAN DO THAT FOR YOU!!
BREYKEN, DO NOT--
CRASH!
SQUEEK
WHY
WHY ARE YOU LIKE THIS
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK
SQUEEK

SUCH A GOOD ALLY! INDEED, YOU ARE!!
MY ALLY, MY SAVIOR, HAS BROUGHT ME FREEDOM. AND ENERGY!!
CHOMP!
AAH!
GET OFF
GET OFF
GET OFF
SQUEEK?!
PT-CHOOO
RAAWWW-WWWK!

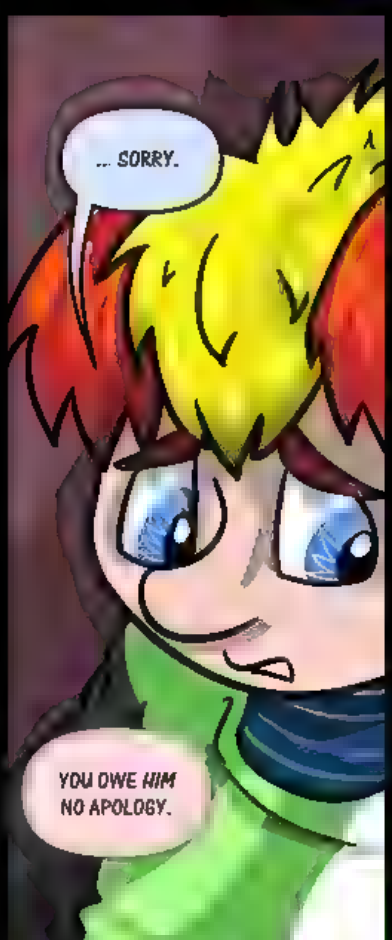
HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM!
GET ON THE--
COUGH
COUGH
... GROUND.
Isn't that the new kid? The one Hazard says is a Circuit?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING BACK HERE?
Uhhh--
WHY'S THE PARROT BACK HERE ON THE FLOOR?
DID YOU LET THAT RAT CIRCUIT OUT?
WHAT?! NO! WHY WOULD I DO THAT?!

. THANK YOU, GENTLEMEN. I'LL HANDLE IT FROM HERE.
TAKE THE BIRDS BACK TO THE AVIARY, WOULD YOU? I'M GOING TO SMOKE.
RAAAWWK!
YOU'VE BEEN A BIT OF A TROUBLEMAKER TODAY, HAVEN'T YOU?
HEH.
THAT AREA IS RESTRICTED FOR A REASON, YOU KNOW. NOT EVERYONE IN THE BUILDING IS ALLOWED BACK THERE.
AND IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, YOUR ID CARD SHOULDN'T HAVE ALLOWED YOU ACCESS
SAM LET ME KNOW YOU WEREN'T IN UNTIL THE AFTERNOON. WE EXPECT YOU HERE BY NINE IN THE MORNING YOU KNOW THAT
YEAH, I UH, SLEPT THROUGH MY ALARM...

IT HAPPENS. I M NOT MAD ABOUT THAT BUT YOU NEED TO TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY.
WE NEED YOU HERE IN THE MORNING, NOT AFTER LUNCH.
OKAY
NOW HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE RESTRICTED WING?
SAY YOU USED SOMEON ELSE'S CARD KEY. IF THEY CHECK THEIR ACCESS LOGS, THEY'LL SEE I HACKED A NUMBER.
I, UH .. USED SOMEONE ELSE'S CARD KEY
WHY?
BECAUSE YOU'RE HIDING STUFF BACK THERE! YOU HAD A RAT CIRCUIT IN A CAGE, AFTER YOU TOLD ME YOU DON'T HAVE CIRCUITS HERE!
HIDING? TERRY, I OFFERED TO SHOW YOU THE LAB ON THE FIRST DAY YOU WERE HERE!
YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO! AND GIVEN THE TRAUMA YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A WHILE BEFORE IT MADE SENSE TO OFFER AGAIN.
YES, THERE'S A CIRCUIT BACK THERE, BUT WE DON'T MAKE FULL CIRCUITS YET. WE'RE FORCED TO CAPTURE WHAT AMANDA SENDS AFTER US, OR THEY'LL CAUSE ALL SORTS OF DAMAGE
THAT EXPLOSION YOU SET OFF? YOU WERE UNSCATHED, BUT WE'VE LOST LIVES TO THAT IN THE PAST.
I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND HOW BADLY TODAY COULD HAVE TURNED OUT THIS IS SERIOUS, TERRY


BUT... I THINK I UNDERSTAND
YOU'RE COMING FROM A PLACE OF DISTRUST. AND SO THAT'S WHAT FUELS YOUR CURIOSITY. AND AFTER YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH AMANDA, YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE SUSPICIOUS.
SO I WANT TO LET YOU KNOW THAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MARIONETTE PROJECT, I WILL TRY TO ANSWER THEM FOR YOU. I CAN'T ANSWER EVERYTHING YET BUT WE WILL GET WHATEVER ANSWERS YOU WANT EVENTUALLY, I PROMISE YOU.
YOU DESERVE THAT MUCH.
. OKAY.
WHAT'S WITH THE RAT?
THEY'RE FROM AMANDA. BACK WHEN THE MARIONETTE PROJECT WAS UNDER MY CONTROL, WE USED MICE AND RATS AS OUR TEST SUBJECTS.
SHE STILL USES THEM, BUT NOW SEND THEM HERE TO SABOTAGE OUR WORK. EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, WE MANAGE TO CAPTURE ONE.
THEY'RE EXTREMELY VOLATILE, THOUGH EVEN BACK WHEN WE USED THEM HERE, THEY WERE. I SUSPECT SHE DECIDED TO KEEP THEM THAT WAY, OR AT LEAST THE ONES SHE SENDS HERE. IT DEFINITELY MAKES THEM HARDER TO CATCH.
THE ONES WE DO MANAGE TO CAPTURE, WE USE FOR REVERSE ENGINEERING.
AND YOU STARVE THEM?
STARVE?
I-I MEAN--
IT JUST SEEMED LIKE IT WASN'T EATING IT'S FOOD, SO... WHAT DO THEY EAT?

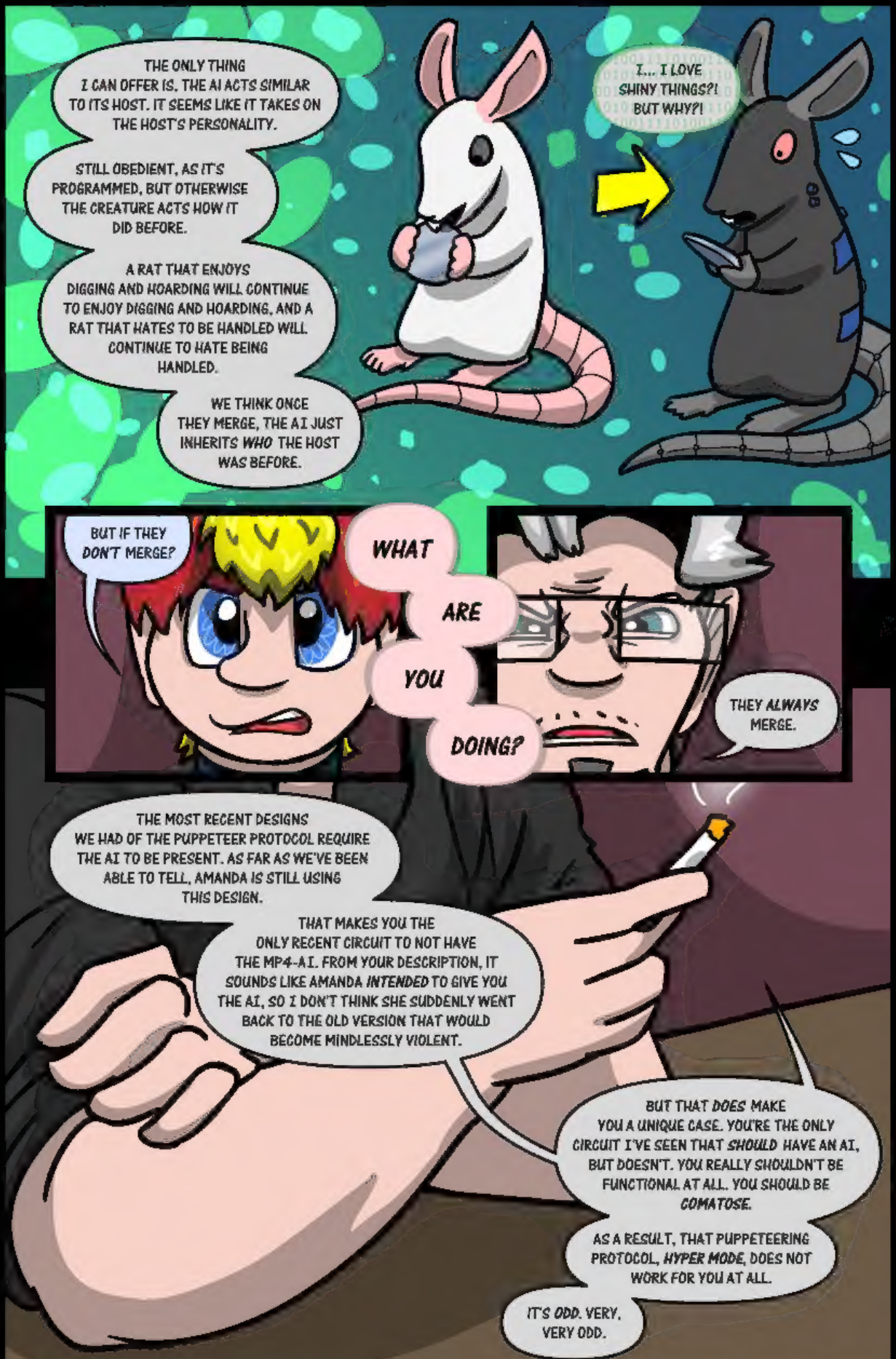
I THINK YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU "FEED" THEM
THE RATS HAVE A STRANGE PROPERTY TO THEM. THEY DON'T EAT NORMAL FOOD ANYMORE, THEY CAN ONLY EAT RAW ELECTRICITY. BUT THEY GET QUICKLY OVERWHELMED AND EXPLODE IF THEY EAT TOO MUCH
A HUNGRY RAT WILL EAT UNTIL FULL, BUT ELECTRICITY ISN'T *FOOD*... SO THE CIRCUITS DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO TELL WHEN "FULL" IS
WE'VE MANAGED TO FEED THEM A FEW TIMES SUCCESSFULLY, BUT IT'S AN INCREDIBLY DELICATE PROCESS. WE ONLY ATTEMPT IT EVERY FEW MONTHS. THEY DON'T ACTUALLY *NEED* TO EAT ANYMORE, TO BE HONEST. SO WHY BOTHER?
THAT WAS THE LAST RAT WE HAD ON HAND FOR SOME TIME. I'M DISAPPOINTED YOU'VE GONE AND BLOWN IT UP


... SORRY.
YOU OWE *HIM* NO APOLOGY.

IT'S FINE. I'M SURE AMANDA'LL SEND MORE. WE'VE JUST BEEN HAVING MORE AND MORE TROUBLE CAPTURING THEM. BUT MAYBE WITH YOU HERE, WE'LL MANAGE TO PICK UP A FEW MORE?
YOU DID NOT MAKE THE GREATEST CHOICES BACK THERE, BUT IT IS MUCH BETTER WITH 67P-343 DEAD.
WE HAVE LIKELY GOTTEN WHAT USE WE COULD OUT OF HIM FROM OUR CHAT. BETTER TO BE GONE THAN TO LET HAZARD EXPLOIT HIM.
...OR NOT. YOU JUST BLEW THAT ONE UP. AFTER ALL

NOW, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW?
...
YES.
THE AI--
UH. MP4-AI?
RIGHT-O.
WHAT DOES IT WANT?
WANT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WE AGREED YOU WOULD NOT TALK TO HIM ABOUT ME.
YEAH, WANT.
I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU COULD SAY A COMPUTER CAN ACTUALLY WANT. IT DOES WHAT IT'S DESIGNED TO DO.
THEN WHAT IS IT DESIGNED TO DO?
PERFORM BASIC BODY MANAGEMENT FOR THE CIRCUIT IN PLACE OF THE HOST, AND SERVE ITS MASTERS.

THE ORIGINAL IDEA WITH THE MARIONETTE PROJECT WAS TO CREATE SUPERPOWERED PUPPETS THAT COULD BE PILOTED FROM A SAFE DISTANCE. THE PROGRAM WE DEVELOPED ALLOWED US TO DO THAT, BUT OUR FIRST WORKING CIRCUITS WERE HOSTILE WHEN WE WEREN'T DIRECTLY CONTROLLING THEM. WE NEEDED A WAY TO KEEP THEM FROM TURNING ON US.
WE CHANGED OUR PROGRAM TO PACIFY THEM, BUT IN THE PROCESS, IT LEFT THEM... I DON'T KNOW IF COMATOSE IS THE RIGHT WORD. BUT WHEN THEY WEREN'T BEING CONTROLLED, THEY WOULD JUST GO LIMP. COLLAPSE. I JUST WANTED THEM OBEDIENT.
BEING ABLE TO PARK YOUR SUPER-PUPPET IS CONVENIENT, I SUPPOSE. BUT THEY STOPPED DOING BASIC THINGS ON THEIR OWN. THEY DON'T BREATHE, THEY DON'T EAT. THEY LEAK, SO TO SAY. THOSE THAT WOULDN'T DIE STILL SAW THEIR BODIES SUFFER AND WEAKEN.
SO WE DEVELOPED AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO PACKAGE WITH OUR PROGRAM. THE AI TAKES CARE OF BASIC NEEDS OF THE HOST BODY, AND HAS NO PROBLEM SURRENDERING CONTROL OF ITSELF WHEN THE PUPPETEER PROTOCOL ACTIVATES. THEY ARE FULLY INTEGRATED AND DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER.
THAT WORKED. THEN AMANDA STOLE IT.
WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO EXAMINE SOME OF THE CIRCUITS SHE'S SENT AFTER US SINCE, AND WE'VE DETERMINED SHE'S CONTINUED DEVELOPING THIS AI IT SEEMS IT'S PROGRAMMED WITH ITS OWN COMBAT CAPABILITIES NOW, SO IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE PUPPETEERED TO FIGHT, BUT THAT'S STILL AN OPTION. I THINK SHE'S CALLING THE PUPPETEER PROTOCOL HYPER MODE NOW, SO I SUPPOSE IT DOES MORE THAN WHAT WE DESIGNED IT TO DO HERE.
YOU WANT TO ASK WHAT A MACHINE LIKE THIS WANTS...
...AND THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME. IT'S QUITE LITERALLY THE MIND OF A PUPPET. IT ISN'T CAPABLE OF WANTING.


THE ONLY THING I CAN OFFER IS, THE AI ACTS SIMILAR TO ITS HOST. IT SEEMS LIKE IT TAKES ON THE HOST'S PERSONALITY.
STILL OBEDIENT, AS IT'S PROGRAMMED, BUT OTHERWISE THE CREATURE ACTS HOW IT DID BEFORE.
A RAT THAT ENJOYS DIGGING AND HOARDING WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY DIGGING AND HOARDING, AND A RAT THAT HATES TO BE HANDLED WILL CONTINUE TO HATE BEING HANDLED.
WE THINK ONCE THEY MERGE, THE AI JUST INHERITS *WHO* THE HOST WAS BEFORE.
I... I LOVE SHINY THINGS?! BUT WHY?!
BUT IF THEY *DON'T* MERGE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THEY *ALWAYS* MERGE.
THE MOST RECENT DESIGNS WE HAD OF THE PUPPETEER PROTOCOL REQUIRE THE AI TO BE PRESENT. AS FAR AS WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO TELL, AMANDA IS STILL USING THIS DESIGN.
THAT MAKES YOU THE ONLY RECENT CIRCUIT TO NOT HAVE THE MP4-AI. FROM YOUR DESCRIPTION, IT SOUNDS LIKE AMANDA *INTENDED* TO GIVE YOU THE AI, SO I DON'T THINK SHE SUDDENLY WENT BACK TO THE OLD VERSION THAT WOULD BECOME MINDLESSLY VIOLENT.
BUT THAT *DOES* MAKE YOU A UNIQUE CASE. YOU'RE THE ONLY CIRCUIT I'VE SEEN THAT *SHOULD* HAVE AN AI, BUT DOESN'T. YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BE FUNCTIONAL AT ALL. YOU SHOULD BE *COMATOSE.*
AS A RESULT, THAT PUPPETEERING PROTOCOL, *HYPER MODE*, DOES NOT WORK FOR YOU AT ALL.
IT'S *ODD.* VERY, VERY ODD.

WE AGREED YOU WOULD *NOT* TALK TO HIM ABOUT ME. HE *IS NOT STUPID*, YOU ARE DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO REVEALING--
AND, AGAIN--
I WANT YOU TO TAKE YOUR EMPLOYMENT HERE SERIOUSLY. YOU SIGNED A CONTRACT. I EXPECT YOU TO BE HERE ON TIME EVERY MORNING AND READY FOR YOUR TASKS.
YOU'RE ALSO REQUIRED TO TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT AMANDA'S LAB AND HER CIRCUITS. IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME, YOU'RE VIOLATING THAT AGREEMENT.
BUT I SUPPOSE THERE IS STILL SOME REASON TO NOT TRUST US JUST YET, I WON'T RUSH YOU.
BUT YOU *WILL* TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW. *UNDERSTAND?*
GOOD. HAVE A NICE EVENING, TERRY.
END